II. IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-18 (Cancelled)

Claim 19 (Original) A segmented tire mold comprising a top mold half and a bottom mold half including a plurality of segments and self-locking means for selectively locking said top mold half to said bottom mold half, said self-locking means comprising,

a lock frame,

a first lock motor supported by said lock frame,

a first lock rod rotatably connected to said first lock motor, and including a quick connect coupling,

a lock ring for use in preventing said segments from sliding outwardly, said lock ring being selectively connected to said first lock rod at said quick connect coupling, and,

a lock cylinder operatively connected to said lock frame for use in selectively raising and lowering said lock frame, said first lock motor, said first lock rod and said lock ring, said lock cylinder thereby selectively placing said lock ring around said segmented tire mold.

Claim 20 (Original) The segmented tire mold of claim 1 further comprising,

second and third lock motors supported by said lock frame,

second and third lock rods rotatably connected to said second and third

lock motors respectively, said second and third lock rods each including a quick connect coupling,

wherein said lock ring is selectively connected to said second and third lock rods at said quick connect couplings, and

wherein said lock cylinder selectively raises and lowers said second and third lock motors and said second and third lock rods.

Claim 21 (Original) A method for locking a mold with a bottom mold half having a plurality of segments and a top mold half comprising the steps of,

providing a locking mechanism that includes a lock frame, a first lock motor supported by said lock frame, a first lock rod rotatably connected to said first lock motor and including a quick connect coupling, a lock ring selectively connectable to said first lock rod at said quick connect coupling, and a lock cylinder operatively connected to said lock frame,

lowering said lock frame until said lock ring is positioned around said plurality of segments,

driving said first lock motor thereby rotating said first lock rod and disconnecting said first lock rod from said lock ring at said quick connect coupling, and,

lifting said locking mechanism away from the mold,

coupling, and,

lifting said locking mechanism away from the mold.

Claim 22 (Original) The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of,

lowering said lock frame until said first lock rod engages said lock ring at said quick connect coupling,

driving said first lock motor thereby rotating said first lock rod and connecting said first lock rod to said lock ring at said quick connect coupling, and,

lifting said lock ring away from said mold.

II. Conclusion:

The subject application is a divisional of U. S. Application Serial No. 09/530,829, filed May 3, 2000. This application is co-pending herewith. In this preliminary amendment, the claims, which are the subject of the pending parent application, have been canceled and the previously non-elected claims 19 – 22 are the subject of this divisional application. At this point, applicant believes that the claims remaining in the case distinguish over the art cited and comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §102, §103, and §112. As such, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the required fee or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 07-1725.

Respectfully submitted,

BROUSE MCDOWELL

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Date

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